AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FDA (FAILURE TO DO ASSIGNMENT) PROGRAM IN HELPING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS COMPLETE SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS

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by Randal L. Schmitt
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An Abstract of a Thesis by
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The problem. The variables of the Failure to Do Assignment System (FDA) were examined as to their impact in helping middle school students complete school assignments.

Procedure. Survey data was collected from the ninety-two sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students at the Newell-Fonda Middle School. A questionnaire was designed to elicit attitudinal responses regarding assignment sheets in helping the goal-setting process; encouragement, and self-esteem development by parents and teachers within teacher-advisee groups; the value of morning breaks, FDA study hall, and activity consequences. Similar survey data was collected from the twelve staff members of the middle school. FDAs of the ninety-two middle school students were recorded and tabulated for a nine-month period as were grade point averages by quarter. The number of FDAs given the second week of school when no FDAs were officially recorded was compared with FDAs given the remaining first semester. Z scores were used to establish if there existed cause to reject the null hypothesis.

Findings. Tests supported the rejection of the null hypothesis that there was no decrease over time in the number of incomplete assignments at the middle school level. The Likert scale questionnaires for students and staff provided mean scores which identified use of assignment sheet for goal-setting, teacher/advisee encouragement, and activity consequences as positive variables in the success of the FDA System.

Recommendations. Further research in single case or group studies is needed. Additional schools with innovative programs for monitoring procrastinating students need to be identified for comparative studies.

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

In 1988 the two smaller school districts of the Fonda and Newell, Iowa communities entered into a sharing agreement that brought into existence the Newell-Fonda Middle School. With the establishment of this middle school of ninety-two students, several concerns were addressed prior to the opening of the 1989-1990 academic year.

A significant concern relating to middle school students was the necessity of monitoring and encouraging adolescents to complete assigned work and academic projects. Past monitoring of academic work completed was discretionary, the individual responsibility of each instructor.

In a 1987 needs assessment for the Fonda district, five of five teachers reported student work completion rates as low as 53% with numerous incompletes turning into permanent zeros. Except for midterm progress reports, there was no district monitoring system to identify and assist students in completing work. With the significant physical, social, and emotional changes experienced by adolescents in grades sixth through eighth, many assignments were often forgotten, neglected, or completed inadequately. Procrastination appeared a widespread tendency.

In an attempt to address this concern, a system to assist middle school students in completing their assignments was developed, adopted

by the Newell-Fonda Board of Education, and termed the FDA System. FDA is an acronym for Failure to Do Assignments.

An FDA is used to determine eligibility for a daily ten-minute break from school work as well as eligibility for school activities. With the assistance and encouragement of teacher advisors, teachers, and parents, all students are expected to complete class assignments as recorded daily in required student assignment books (see Appendix A for sample assignment book page).

Each day teachers turn into the central office the names of all students who have not completed or handed in an assignment or project during a five-day period. If a student's name appears on the list more than three times during that five-day period, that student becomes ineligible for all activities and break time for the following five-day period. If the ineligible student's name does not appear on the next FDA list more than three times, that student will become eligible for the next five-day period.

Students ineligible for break time attend a daily ten-minute study session where, with individual assistance from staff members, work can be monitored and completed. Grades are not used to determine eligibility for break time nor for co-curricular activities. With the encouragement of the teacher advisor, teachers, and parent, the FDA System provides each student three opportunities to complete work before a permanent zero is

recorded. TAs or teacher/advisory groups meet for fifteen minutes daily to assist in the monitoring, encouragement, and completion of assignments by those who may have not completed work.

Assignment sheets with specific goals, procedures, and assigned activities are provided in files by classroom entries to enable students who have been absent to conveniently locate assignments. Assignment due dates are also provided to further avoid FDAs (see Appendix B for sample assignment sheet).

Incentives in the form of certificates, awards, and faculty recognition are also used at the end of each quarter to support those who have completed work assigned according to the guidelines of each class.

In a desire to analyze closely its educational program, the Newell-Fonda Middle School seeks to evaluate the FDA System as to its effectiveness in identifying, monitoring, and encouraging students who may procrastinate in the completion of assignments.

Students at the middle level are in a developmental stage where procrastination is a constant reality. Organizational skills are not only difficult to teach but are difficult to reinforce on a daily basis. Instructional goals within the classroom demand teacher attention allowing students who are less organized the opportunity to become more organized by using a system of assignment monitoring. Therefore,

it is the observation of this researcher in the development of the null hypothesis that there is no increase in student completion of assignments over time using the Failure to Do Assignment System in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades at the Newell-Fonda Middle School.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Middle school student learning is often jeopardized by student procrastination. Because procrastination seems to be negatively related to achievement (Broadus, 1983), educators often have special concerns that these identified students succeed academically.

Broadus (1983) finds that a majority of middle level students are affected in some way by procrastination during these developmental years. He broadly describes procrastinating students by their reactions to assignment completion. His categorized survey finds these students

1. Have sincere intentions to complete assignments and make such statements as, "I'll do it. Let me turn it in tomorrow or later today" while often not realizing they are procrastinating.

2. Center on what they have not completed rather than on what they have accomplished. Students may use statements as, "I can't do my math" when realistically there may be only one portion of the math assignment that they do not understand.

3. Motivated infrequently to achieve more by lower letter grades or teacher critiques. Assignments poorly completed are quickly crumpled and thrown in the wastebasket.

4. Have a short attention span within the classroom.

5. Remark that they can perform better and then do not improve on the following test or assignment.

6. Believe they work better under pressures such as time.

7. Say, "I don't understand" or "I can't do this" when asked why they are not working.

8. Resent being told that homework is still not completed.

9. Comment that they can complete work on time and then do not follow through by handing in the next assignment.

Although widespread procrastination may affect motivation to achieve, limited middle level research has been conducted and analyzed in professional literature (Ottens, 1982). A serious demand exists for increased research techniques for monitoring and motivating students at the middle level.

A random sample of four hundred National Middle School Association members identified questions they would like answered by middle school research. After topics were organized and scaled, the usefulness of each topic on a scale from very useful (7) to not useful (1) was rated. Mean scores and standard deviations were computed for each item of the final questionnaire.

High priority was given to identifying and validating techniques for monitoring and motivating middle school students who tend to procrastinate. The high usefulness score ($M = 5.66$) and relatively low standard deviation ($SD = 1.25$) indicated substantial agreement among respondents on the positive need for increased research (Skutch, 1983).

The limited research completed at the middle level has focused on the perceived components of procrastination for middle level students.

Burka and Yuen (1983) and Ottens (1982) believe that the components of procrastination form a method by which students can not cope and not display their weaknesses by testing their abilities.

Of the sixteen causes and characteristics of procrastinators described by Broadus (1983), five are especially applicable to middle school students:

1. Low self-concept has been correlated by researchers (Kanoy, Johnson, & Kanoy, 1980; Skaalvik, 1983) to low academic achievement while other researchers (Zinger, 1983) have established a relationship between procrastination and the elements of achievement and self-concept. Burka and Yuen (1983) describe how certain individuals view their self-worth only in terms of their ability and performance. They are successful people only when they have performed well. By procrastinating, one has put forth no effort to perform an academic task and perceived self-concept is not threatened.

In earlier research, Marsh (1987) suggests a similar self-concept which is directly affected by how well students perform in school. Those who procrastinate and do no homework retain a negative attitude about school while those who procrastinate due to poor organizational skills feel more frustration related to their educational success or failure.

March theorized that self-concept contributes reasons for student failure to complete academic work. The results suggest that students who do not understand a concept being taught are more likely to procrastinate and not complete exercises outside of class because they believe they will not do well enough to earn a respectable grade anyway. These same students appear to have a poor self-concept outside of school as well.

2. Procrastinators often experience the fear of failure which centers on having unrealistic expectations and goals for performance and fulfillment (Dye, 1984). By procrastinating, a student eludes the risk of failure and again protects self-esteem.

Earlier research by Feather and Simon (1973) supports these later findings. A group of students displayed difficulty in accepting responsibility in time planning and organizing work because they were certain that they were going to fail.

3. As with many adolescents in middle school, rebellion against established authority is prevalent. To gain assumed power and control over others, procrastinators avoid doing what is expected or requested. Procrastination then becomes a way to express anger toward those in authority (Ellis & Knaus, 1977) or a way of rebelling against authority (Broadus, 1983).

4. In addition to rebellion against authority, middle school

students who procrastinate may experience feelings of being overwhelmed. Believing they have so much to do and not knowing how nor when to begin, procrastinators never start. Burka and Yuen (1983) report that because the family often does not encourage children to take control over their lives, children at an early age become discouraged. Procrastinators must be helped in the process of making choices in order to increase their own self-esteem and fulfillment.

5. Procrastinators who have not learned the skills to approach and complete a task in an organized fashion are likely to leave that task unfinished and be overcome with feelings of frustrations, failure, and loss of self-esteem (Dobson, Campbell, & Dobson, 1982; Zinger, 1983).

Broadus (1983) points out, however, that teaching problem solving, goal setting, and time management skills are necessary, but not sufficient, to treat procrastinators. Interventions by concerned individuals in supportive settings such as teacher advisor/advisee programs must also address negative feelings and fears which procrastinators have developed as compensation to work completion.

While specific research for middle level students is limited, a variety of research into student procrastination has centered on the procrastinating learning-disabled student who often lacks the skills and work habits to complete school work on a more consistent level than does the regular classroom student. Once again, poorly developed

planning skills (Hallahan, Gajar, Cohen, & Tarver, 1978) and low motivation (Tollefson et al., 1980), coupled with lack of independence in completing assigned work (Tollefson, Tracy, Johnson, & Chatman, 1985), weigh heavily upon the academic achievement of disabled students in completing work within an established time period.

Logical planning, coupled with goal setting skill, promotes academic achievement (Bandura, 1977, 1978). Bandura's research centered on developing training programs for student organization using four interrelated phases which are used by teacher advisor/advisee programs: (a) setting realistic academic goals, (b) developing plans to reach these goals, (c) implementing these plans and monitoring progress toward academic goals by evaluating progress through personal standards, and (d) accepting responsibility for personal success or failure in goal attainment (Johnson & White, 1971).

Such a format promotes an interdependence whereby students are given options, not mere solutions, in the process of becoming successful academically (Coloroso, 1991). Without these interrelated phases to assure procrastinating students that effort alone in the completion of work is an unstable factor, these students find greater difficulty in the completion of academic work (Tollefson, Tracy, Johnson, & Chatman, 1985).

Presenting the fundamentals of behavior change (Brigham, Hopper,

Hill, deArmis, & Newsom, 1985), the use of self-instruction strategies (Leon & Pepe, 1983), planning and goal implementation strategies (Tollefson et al., 1985), and self-evaluation techniques (Rhode, Morgan, & Young, 1983) have been successful in teaching students to assume personal responsibility for their academic performance.

Melchenbaum and Goodman (1971) offer early research that centers on students asking themselves questions and then answering them to encourage careful consideration of the requirements of a given assignment as well as their performance compared with those requirements. Such a procedure yielded a higher assignment completion rate than merely beginning the assignment without requirement and performance recognition.

Tollefson et al. (1985), too, uses a planning and goal implementation strategy to teach adolescents with learning problems to increase their rate of completing academic tasks. Students were taught to write weekly achievement contracts which consisted of a goal statement for the week and a specific plan to meet that goal. They were then taught to evaluate both their goal and plan at the end of each week. Of the eight subjects in this study, four showed an increase in the tasks completed within the resource room. Three of the eight students increased the number of tasks completed within the regular classroom.

Glomb and West (1990) also address the issue of assignment completion of procrastinators within the scope of behavior modification research. The established strategies of (a) teaching students the fundamentals of behavior change, (b) teaching students to use self-instruction strategies, (c) teaching students to set goals and implement plans to achieve those goals, and (d) teaching students to evaluate the quality of their work are central to what is termed the WATCH procedure.

WATCH procedure is designed to teach adolescents how to plan and monitor their academic work for (a) completion of assignments, (b) accuracy of following directions or performance standards for the assignment, and (c) neatness.

WATCH is an acronym for the steps in the procedure: (a) write down the assignment when it is given and write a due date, (b) ask for clarification or help on the assignment if needed, (c) task-analyze the assignment and schedule the tasks over the days available to complete the assignment, and (d) check all work for completeness, accuracy, and neatness.

The multiple baseline design across subjects was used to support student use of the WATCH procedure to improve the completeness (Data I-from 22% to 87%; Data II-from 62% to 89%), accuracy, and neatness of creative writing homework assignments over a limited time frame.

Though the completion results appear significant, results in the areas of accuracy and neatness need to be interpreted carefully due to variables of time, preconceived notions of teachers regarding what constitutes performance and individually construed definitions of the terms completeness, neatness and accuracy.

Additional recommendation is made to start such WATCH studies at the beginning of the academic year rather than later so that monitoring and reinforcement can be done throughout a nine-month frame of time, thus giving a more complete picture of the procedure.

Although teaching procrastinating students to improve their performance within the middle level classroom is critical, relevant research beyond special learning needs students is focused on lower elementary students (Bandura & Perloff, 1967; Bolstad & Johnson, 1972; Harris & Graham, 1985). Further middle level research is needed to analyze procedures for helping adolescents complete assignments which they are expected to work on independently.

Outside the special education and regular classroom, the idea of assisting procrastinators in accepting responsibility for not only their work but for their personal growth is explored through counseling programs.

Just as teachers may experience from adolescents a reluctance or resistance to completing work, counselors too may experience these

obstacles when working with students and/or patients.

Because most people show resistance at some time during the guidance process initiated by counselors (Cormier & Cormier, 1985) and teachers, it is often difficult to encourage student responsibility for change by using assignments. Failure to follow through on a between session homework assignment is often an invitation for resistance to surface (Goldfried, 1982).

Counteracting this resistance by establishing a cooperative environment in which change is based on mutual goals and plans is critical (Lazarus & Fay, 1982).

Foremost to creating such an environment is establishing dialogue which develops cooperation rather than opposition. Telling a client is likely to result in some level of opposition (Wilson & Evans, 1979) whereas a nondirective request is less likely to elicit negative reactions (Lazarus & Fay, 1982).

In school counseling, as in school teaching, the concept of shared responsibility (with the ultimate decision belonging to the student) helps that student deal with what Blatt and Erlich (1982) call "the ultimate resistance-assuming responsibility for the conduct of one's life".

In order to increase the likelihood of shared responsibility within the classroom of adolescents, Larrabee (1988) offers a ten-step procedure to keep resistance and reluctance to academic work at a

minimum. In summary, these ten steps stress positive discussion of the purpose and direction of the work assigned with emphasis on the personal benefits attainable by commitment to the completion of that work. Thus, there is a move toward self-management through this process.

An empirical study by Natriello and McDill (1986) uses a sample of 12,146 students from twenty public schools across divergent cultural patterns and district sizes to attempt a definition of what determinants motivate students to self-manage themselves in completing academic work. The results of this analysis provide further insight into procrastinators. On one hand, teachers and peers set higher standards for students who appear to be more able to deal with a challenge (students of higher ability, high expectations), whereas parents set higher standards for students who appear to be less able to deal with a challenge (students of low ability, low educational expectations).

The analysis of data addressing the effects of effort on performance shows that high standards set by not only teachers, but by parents as well, also generate a positive effort on completed academic work. The standards set by these groups continue to affect work completed even when social background factors, parents' aspirations, student's expectations, and curricula are controlled. Higher standards appear to generate greater student effort under a variety of conditions.

Although involving parents in the process of student completion of work is valuable, a survey conducted by Walberg (1984) of special education teachers across the United States found that 39% of the teachers surveyed experienced problems with involving parents in homework completion.

In 1988 a more encompassing National Education Longitudinal Survey surveyed 25,000 eighth graders, 23,000 parents, 52,000 teachers and 1,000 principals of schools these students attended. Of the 25,000 eighth graders surveyed, over 5,000 said their parents rarely or never checked their homework for completion nor for accuracy. Nearly six parents out of ten said they rarely or never helped their child with homework (Cross, 1990).

Earlier, McCelland (1982) studied achievement motivation and willingness to perform school-related tasks without procrastination and suggested three conditions which should foster improved academic motivation:

1. Students must believe they can learn and will develop the ability to achieve. No matter how much students desire to be successful, they are likely to procrastinate and eventually fail if the established instructional goals are beyond their level of capability.

2. Students are more likely to increase their academic motivation and level of performance if they have a precise idea of what they are to

do. Directions must be specific and definite for middle school students.

3. Students must be able to relate the goals of instruction to their daily lives. Students' motivation and willingness to achieve will increase with this sense of applicability.

Alshuler (1976) found that an optimum level of student motivation can be achieved by permitting students to formulate their own goals and then evaluate them. He presented students with a learning task in the form of a self-competition game. As in teacher advisor/advisee programs, students set their own goals and were evaluated according to terms they created themselves. This format resulted in an increase in both the level of achievement and interest in the task.

Perhaps most basic to the research on motivation of student procrastinators are Chamberlain's (1981) guidelines for improvement of student motivation to minimize procrastination. Based upon a national study, parents and teachers can expect positive results when:

1. Negativism is replaced by encouragement and assistance.

2. Opportunities for success within the structure are created by providing options for students.

3. Concern is communicated on a regular basis to students.

4. Feelings of self-worth are built through student opportunities to organize their lives.

Chamberlain's research supports Morse's (1987) study of thirty-

one students identified as procrastinators whose self-reports and analysis indicated that participation in a multimodal group improved homework completion scores to a greater degree than did those procrastinating students without the multimodal group benefit. (Mean converted homework completion score for students in multimodal group was 7.96 with a SD = 1.53; mean converted score of students without the multimodal group was 6.75 with a SD = 1.25). When procrastinating students do not respond to problem-solving, time management skills, and behavior modifications, other variables as those suggested by Chamberlain (1981) need consideration.

In summary, research suggests that even though it is difficult to monitor and record student work completion by formulating a consistent schoolwide program, students who tend to procrastinate can be helped when they are allowed opportunities for success through encouragement and assistance. From incentives to modification programs such as WATCH, procrastinating students can achieve more academic success when allowed opportunities to complete homework successfully. The goal remains finding a monitoring program which will assist students, teachers, and administrators in measuring progress toward successfully completing homework.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used in this study centered around a multimethod collection of data including qualitative data in the form of attitudinal surveys as well as quantitative data in the form of FDAs recorded over time and analyzed by z scores, recorded assignments given, and grade percentiles.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were the ninety-two sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students attending the Newell-Fonda Middle School during the 1990-1991 academic year. Since the initial size of the student body was small, the target population and experimentally accessible population were synonymous.

Three students who either entered the district mid-year or moved from the district prior to the second semester were excluded as subjects, thus decreasing bias due to experimental mortality.

Of the ninety-two students in this study, twenty-eight were sixth graders, thirty-two were seventh graders, and thirty-two were eighth graders.

Five of the ninety-two students were RSDS students who received additional help by a resource teacher present within the regular classroom.

The ninety-two students became the control group for this study

for the following reasons:

First, established board policy mandated the use of the FDA System for all students in the middle school grades. Administratively, it was not acceptable to establish a group of students whose assignments were monitored by a method other than by use of the FDA System.

Second, fifteen middle schools of comparable size or larger were contacted for possible comparative studies of methods used to assist procrastinating students. Of the fifteen schools contacted via a telephone questionnaire, none had an organized system for student assignment completion that yielded useable recorded data. A zero given the day an assignment was due was the traditional method of handling late assignments in the middle schools surveyed (see Appendix C for complete survey).

Third, in order to focus on the FDA System in place, the research used the ninety-two students of the Newell-Fonda Middle School as its experimentally accessible population to hypothesize if, over time, the FDA System helped increase the number of assignments completed by procrastinating students.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed to the ninety-two students in this study. The questionnaire centered on seven key aspects of the FDA System, four of which correlated to earlier research. The remaining three

centered on basic data regarding the FDA System at the Newell-Fonda Middle School:

1. Student completion of assignments and assistance with FDA System and absentee sheets (questions 1, 2, 4, 19).

2. FDA procedure and format (questions 3, 5).

3. Encouragement and self-esteem building by parents (questions 10, 11, 12).

4. Encouragement and self-esteem building by teachers/TA groups (questions 6, 7, 13, 14).

5. Opinions regarding the value of homework given (questions 15, 16, 17).

6. The value of morning break and activity consequences (questions 18, 21).

7. General reactions to the FDA System (questions 8, 20).

Student questionnaires received validation through consultation with independent researcher Dr. Dale Foreman of Des Moines, Iowa. The questions were also pretested with a group of five students not involved in the survey who were asked to repeat their understanding of the meaning of each question in their own words. Revisions were made and further retesting was then done (see Appendix D for full questionnaire).

Questionnaires were distributed on the same day to students during the first ten minutes of each language arts class. The same set of directions was given by the same individual to each group of students. Students were guaranteed anonymity on the coded survey as well as assurance that responses were not recorded for central office needs. To limit the Hawthorne Effect and possible invalidation, students were not informed of their participation in a thesis project. No questionnaires were improperly filled out. Due to the centrality of the subjects, the return rate for each of the three grades was 100%.

The staff questionnaire was developed using the same pattern as the student questionnaire. Two former staff members who were familiar with the FDA System during its year of inception pretested the questionnaire employing the same question method as used with the

student questionnaire.

The staff questionnaire centered on five variables of the FDA System, three of which correlated to the student survey. The remaining two centered on basic data regarding the FDA System as the Newell-Fonda Middle School:

1. Student encouragement by staff members and TA advisors (questions 1, 3, 5).

2. Homework opinions of staff members teaching middle school (question 7).

3. Completion of assignments by procrastinating students (questions 2, 4, 6, 11, 12).

4. FDA System procedures and format (question 8).

5. General reactions of staff members (questions 9, 10, 13) (see Appendix E for full questionnaire).

Staff members were surveyed during a weekly meeting and were guaranteed anonymity. They were also advised that the data collected was not for evaluation purposes. To again limit the Hawthorne Effect, staff members were not informed as to the data's use in a thesis project.

Data

Grouped data on the number of FDAs received weekly over a 37 week time frame by each of the ninety-two subjects was compiled by analyzing central office records and weekly FDA lists. Administrative

permission was received to analyze grade files, records and the Mustang Makeup Assignment Sheets. This data provided a record of the total number of assignments assigned and completed per student per quarter (see Appendix A for Mustang Assignment Sheets).

Constants

Constants in the study were the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade middle school students attending the Newell-Fonda Middle School during the 1990-1991 academic year, the staff members, courses, and sections taught.

Independent Variable

The FDA System of monitoring students who tend to procrastinate in the completion of school work.

Dependent Variable

The number of times per week each student appears on the FDA list published by the central office.

Intervening Variables

The maturation level of procrastinating students as well as their organizational skills and learning styles.

Control Variables

The sex and grade level of each student as well as the courses taken.

Research Variables

1. Grade averages as indicators of the FDA System's success in decreasing the number of incompleted assignments.

2. Assistance provided students by absentee assignment sheets.

3. Student perceptions regarding subsequent FDAs given an incompleted assignment.

4. Parental encouragement in monitoring work completed while building self-esteem to help complete that work.

5. Teacher advisee encouragement in monitoring work completed while building self-esteem to help complete that work.

6. The impact on students of consequences within the FDA System.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes the breakdown of reactions by the twenty-eight sixth grade subjects who were involved in the research regarding the FDA System. The five-part Likert Scale ranked from greatest degree of mean agreement (+1.41) to greatest degree of mean disagreement (-1.19) the attitudinal reactions of the sixth grade subjects involved in the study.

Table 2 summarizes the breakdown of reactions by the thirty-two seventh grade subjects who were involved in the research regarding the FDA System. The five-part Likert Scale ranked from greatest degree of mean agreement (+1.41) to greatest degree of mean disagreement (-1.09) the attitudinal reactions of the seventh grade subjects involved in the study.

Table 3 summarizes the breakdown of reactions by the thirty-two eighth grade subjects who were involved in the research regarding the FDA System. The five-part Likert Scale ranked from greatest degree of mean agreement (+0.90) to greatest degree of mean disagreement (-1.48) the attitudinal reactions of the eighth grade subjects involved in the study.

Table 4 summarizes the compilation of reactions by the ninety-two sixth, seventh, and eighth grade subjects involved in the research regarding the FDA System. The five-part Likert Scale ranked from

greatest degree of mean agreement (+1.08) to greatest degree of mean disagreement (-1.19) the reactions of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade subjects involved in the study.

A point rating scale for significant agreement (M = +.7 and above), negligible agreement (M = +.69 to M = -.69), and significant disagreement (M = -.7 and below) was established prior to research for later interpretive discussion. This is summarized in Table 5.

Table 6 summarizes the breakdown of reactions by the twelve staff members who use the FDA System. The five-part Likert Scale ranked from greatest degree of mean agreement (M = +1.31) to greatest degree of mean disagreement (M+-1.31) the reactions of the staff involved in the study.

Table 7 summarizes results of cross tabulation tables created to develop the scale for teacher advisor/advisee groups as related to student perception of encouragement and assistance provided them in avoiding procrastination by completing work assigned. The scale has a ranking (M = +1.67 to -.22) based upon the five-part Likert Scale.

Tables 8, 9, 10, 11 summarize grade point averages of the ninety-two subjects. The tables represent a grade point scale from 12 to 0 with maximum and minimum grade points computed. Averages (along with standard deviations) are presented for the first and second semesters of academic work for each of the three grades studied.

In order to quantify the data on the number of assignments completed from the first two weeks of school wherein no FDAs were recorded to the remaining weeks of the semester wherein FDAs were issued, recorded, and dealt with through the format of the FDA System; the statistical z score was used. Raw scores were transformed into z scores and a confidence level of .01 was established.

From the results of the z test of the FDA data from the second week of school to the end of the first semester, there appears to have been a significant decline (difference) in the number of FDAs which were given by teachers to subjects of the study ($z = 6.593$, $p < .01$, two-tailed).

Table 1

Breakdown of Attitudinal Reactions by Sixth Grade Subjects

Question Number	Average	Question Topic
9	1.41	Absentee sheet helps
4	1.37	Avoiding second FDA
1	1.22	Getting FDAs bothers me
21	1.15	I get FDAs finished so I do not miss activities
14	1.11	TA encourages me to get my FDA made up
16	1.11	I do not get homework done in class
7	1.07	Teachers record FDAs in assignment books
11	1.07	Parents encourage me to make up FDAs
6	1.04	I know why I'm getting an FDA
20	1.04	FDA System helps me get my work done on time
8	0.85	Fewer FDAs as the year goes on
3	0.75	I receive FDAs for unfinished work
10	0.63	My parents know when I get an FDA
5	0.22	In FDA study hall I work on assignments not finished
18	0.15	I miss having the morning break
13	-0.11	Teachers check assignment to know if I have an FDA
12	-0.37	My parents look at my assignment book for FDAs
19	-0.41	I have gotten a zero because I got 4 FDAs
15	-0.81	Homework does not strengthen what I learn in class
17	-0.93	Homework not done because it does not have value to me
2	-1.19	I find it difficult to complete work because I delay

Note: The data from the student surveys has been ranked in order from greatest degree of agreement to the greatest degree of disagreement.

Table 2

Breakdown of Attitudinal Reactions by Seventh Grade Subjects

Question Number	Average	Question Topic
21	1.44	I get FDAs finished so I do not miss activities
1	1.09	Getting FDAs bothers me
3	1.06	I receive FDAs for unfinished work
4	1.03	Avoiding second FDA
9	1.00	Absentee sheet helps
11	0.97	Parents encourage me to make up FDAs
6	0.94	I know why I'm getting an FDA
7	0.91	Teachers record FDAs in assignment books
14	0.67	TA encourages me to get my FDA made up
8	0.53	Fewer FDAs as the year goes on
5	0.44	In FDA study hall I work on assignments not finished
20	0.41	FDA System helps me get my work done on time
16	0.34	I do not get homework done in class
18	0.09	I miss having the morning break
10	-0.25	My parents know when I get an FDA
15	-0.25	Homework does not strengthen what I learn in class
13	-0.44	Teachers check assignment to know if I have an FDA
12	-0.84	My parents look at my assignment book for FDAs
17	-0.91	Homework not done because it does not have value to me
2	-0.91	I find it difficult to complete work because I delay
19	-1.09	I have gotten a zero because I got 4 FDAs

Note: The data from the student surveys has been ranked in order from greatest degree of agreement to the greatest degree of disagreement.

Table 3

Breakdown of Attitudinal Reactions by Eighth Grade Subjects

Question Number	Average	Question Topic
3	0.90	I receive FDAs for unfinished work
14	0.68	TA encourages me to get my FDA made up
4	0.55	Avoiding second FDA
9	0.55	Absentee sheet helps
7	0.55	Teachers record FDAs in assignment books
8	0.45	Fewer FDAs as the year goes on
6	0.16	I know why I'm getting an FDA
15	-0.03	Homework does not strengthen what I learn in class
13	-0.16	Teachers check assignment to know if I have an FDA
16	-0.23	I do not get homework done in class
1	-0.26	Getting FDAs bothers me
21	-0.39	I get FDAs finished so I do not miss activities
18	-0.55	I miss having the morning break
20	-0.61	FDA System helps me get my work done on time
17	-0.65	Homework not done because it does not have value to me
11	-0.68	Parents encourage me to make up FDAs
5	-0.74	In FDA study hall I work on assignments not finished
10	-1.10	My parents know when I get an FDA
2	-1.23	I find it difficult to complete work because I delay
19	-1.29	I have gotten a zero because I got 4 FDAs
12	-1.48	My parents look at my assignment book for FDAs

Note: The data from the student surveys has been ranked in order from greatest degree of agreement to the greatest degree of disagreement.

Table 4

Breakdown of Attitudinal Reactions by All Subjects

Question Number	Average	Question Topic
4	1.08	Avoiding second FDA
9	0.97	Absentee sheet helps
3	0.91	I receive FDAs for unfinished work
14	0.83	TA encourages me to get my FDA made up
7	0.80	Teachers record FDAs in assignment books
1	0.77	Getting FDAs bothers me
21	0.72	I get FDAs finished so I do not miss activities
6	0.70	I know why I'm getting an FDA
8	0.60	Fewer FDAs as the year goes on
11	0.40	Parents encourage me to make up FDAs
16	0.38	I do not get homework done in class
20	0.24	FDA System helps me get my work done on time
5	-0.02	In FDA study hall I work on assignments not finished
18	-0.12	I miss having the morning break
10	-0.27	My parents know when I get an FDA
13	-0.30	Teachers check assignment to know if I have an FDA
15	-0.34	Homework does not strengthen what I learn in class
17	-0.84	Homework not done because it does not have value to me
12	-0.93	My parents look at my assignment book for FDAs
19	-0.96	I have gotten a zero because I got 4 FDAs
2	-1.09	I find it difficult to complete work because I delay

Note: The data from the student surveys has been ranked in order from greatest degree of agreement to the greatest degree of disagreement.

Table 5

Point Significant Ratings

For Student Attitudinal Survey	
+1.44 to +0.70	significant agreement
+0.69 to -0.69	negligible agreement/disagreement
- 0.70 to -1.48	significant disagreement
For Staff Attitudinal Survey	
+1.69 to +0.70	significant agreement
+0.69 to -0.69	negligible agreement/disagreement
- 0.70 to -1.31	significant disagreement

Table 6

Breakdown of Attitudinal Reactions by Staff Members

Question Number	Average	Question Topic
1	1.69	I give an FDA
5	1.69	I let students know
13	1.69	I believe the FDA System gives students a choice
7	1.31	The homework I give at FNMS reinforces
9	1.25	I see a middle school student problem of procrastinating
3	1.23	I encourage students to make up FDA work
11	0.94	I see a positive difference in the number of assignments
10	0.75	Students in my classes do not tend to make excuses
8	0.00	When I am in FDA study hall
4	-0.63	My students do not try to make up their first FDA
2	-1.00	I have to give a grade of 0
12	-1.00	I do not believe that records show FDA helps
6	-1.31	By reviewing my grade book

Note: The data from the staff survey has been ranked in order from greatest degree of agreement to the greatest degree of disagreement.

Table 7

Cross Tabulation Table: Student Perception of Assistance Provided By Teacher Advisors

Code	Likert Point Correlate					Ratio	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	Likert/No. in TA	
A	0	0	0	1	7	15/9	+1.67
B	1	1	1	1	6	10/10	+1.00
C	0	0	4	3	1	5/8	+0.625
D	2	1	3	1	2	0/9	0.0
E	0	2	2	4	3	8/11	+0.73
F	0	1	1	3	7	16/12	+1.33
G	0	0	1	3	8	19/12	+1.58
H	1	2	1	4	2	4/10	-0.40
I	2	2	2	2	1	-2/9	-0.22

Note: +1.67 to +0.70 - significant agreement, +0.69 to -0.69 - negligible agreement/disagreement, and -0.70 and lower - significant disagreement. Cross tabulation was made using coded teacher advisor data, number of students within each TA and Likert scale student survey question number 14.

Table 8

Student Grade Point Averages for Sixth Grade Subjects

	Semester 1					Semester 2				
Stdnt	Sci	Rdng	Eng	Math	GPA	Sci	Rdng	Eng	Math	GPA
1	9	9	11	10	9.75	11	7	10	10	9.50
2	5	2	6	6	4.75	5	6	8	6	6.25
3	8	4	8	6	6.50	7	4	8	7	6.50
4	11	11	11	11	11.00	11	10	11	10	10.50
5	5	2	4	5	4.00	8	1	2	0	2.75
6	9	8	10	10	9.25	11	7	10	8	9.00
7	0	2	0	0	0.50	2	2	0	5	2.25
8	5	1	2	2	2.50	10	1	1	1	3.25
9	8	4	8	7	6.75	8	9	8	8	8.25
10	8	4	8	7	6.75	8	2	8	5	5.75
11	5	1	5	8	4.75	5	1	5	5	4.00
12	5	1	8	8	5.50	5	1	8	4	4.50
13	8	5	8	9	7.50	11	7	8	9	8.75
14	4	0	2	6	3.00	4	1	5	1	2.75
15	2	1	2	3	2.00	2	1	9	1	3.25
16	5	1	2	4	3.00	5	2	5	3	3.75
17	8	5	8	8	7.25	11	8	10	9	9.50
18	8	7	8	8	7.75	11	8	9	7	8.75
19	5	6	6	4	5.25	8	8	8	3	6.75
20	5	4	8	6	5.75	11	6	9	9	8.75
21	11	8	8	10	9.25	11	6	8	8	8.25
22	5	2	4	4	3.75	5	1	6	1	3.25
23	8	5	8	7	7.00	8	7	10	5	7.50
24	2	1	4	7	3.50	8	1	5	7	5.25
25	7	7	11	10	8.75	8	8	11	9	9.00
26	11	9	11	11	10.50	11	9	11	11	10.50
27	5	4	4	2	3.75	5	4	6	1	4.00
28	11	10	11	10	10.50	11	10	11	11	10.75

Table 9

Student Grade Point Averages for Seventh Grade Subjects

	Semester 1					Semester 2				
Stdnt	Sci	Eng	Lit	Math	GPA	Sci	Rdng	Eng	Math	GPA
29	11	10	11	11	10.75	11	10	11	11	10.75
30	8	6	8	9	7.75	8	7	7	6	7.00
31	9	9	11	9	9.50	8	9	8	10	8.75
32	9	5	7	7	7.00	5	5	7	4	5.25
33	11	7	8	11	9.25	11	9	9	10	9.75
34	8	5	8	9	7.50	8	8	8	6	7.50
35	11	10	11	11	10.75	11	10	11	11	10.75
36	8	9	9	11	9.25	9	10	11	7	9.25
37	2	5	3	2	3.00	5	5	2	0	3.00
38	8	5	8	9	7.50	8	7	8	7	7.50
39	4	2	5	7	4.50	5	4	5	9	5.75
40	8	6	5	8	6.75	11	5	8	9	8.25
41	11	9	8	11	9.75	11	9	11	11	10.50
42	5	5	5	2	4.25	8	7	5	2	5.50
43	5	3	5	5	4.50	5	5	5	5	5.00
44	5	5	5	8	5.75	5	5	5	8	5.75
45	8	6	8	8	7.50	10	8	9	8	8.75
46	6	5	7	4	5.50	5	2	3	2	3.00
47	7	6	8	8	7.25	11	8	8	8	8.75
48	5	4	4	2	3.75	5	4	0	2	2.75
49	8	6	9	9	8.00	8	6	8	9	7.75
50	8	4	8	9	7.25	8	6	8	5	6.75
51	11	7	11	10	9.75	11	10	11	11	10.75
52	11	10	11	10	10.50	11	10	11	10	10.50
53	5	2	2	2	2.75	5	4	4	2	3.75
54	11	6	9	9	8.75	11	8	8	9	9.00
55	2	4	2	5	3.25	5	5	1	5	4.00
56	11	4	9	6	7.50	11	5	8	1	6.25
57	5	5	6	4	5.00	5	4	4	2	3.75
58	4	2	4	6	4.00	2	2	4	3	2.75
59	2	1	2	7	3.00	2	4	2	5	3.25
60	3	2	4	4	3.25	2	4	4	7	4.25

Table 10

Student Grade Point Averages for Eighth Grade Subjects

	Semester 1						Semester 2					
Stdnt	Sci	Lit	Eng	Hist	Math	GPA	Sci	Lit	Eng	Hist	Math	GPA
61	5	2	5	8	4	4.80	5	5	7	8	3	5.60
62	8	6	6	8	9	7.40	8	8	8	8	9	8.20
63	8	4	7	5	9	6.60	8	7	6	7	5	6.60
64	8	8	6	8	11	8.20	8	7	6	11	10	8.40
65	8	7	8	8	8	7.80	8	6	8	8	4	6.80
66	11	6	8	9	9	8.60	11	6	8	8	9	8.40
67	8	7	8	10	10	8.60	8	8	8	9	10	8.60
68	6	9	8	10	9	8.40	8	8	9	10	9	8.80
69	1	5	2	5	6	3.80	5	5	2	5	1	3.60
70	4	5	5	5	4	4.60	4	3	6	7	0	4.00
71	5	6	6	8	6	6.20	5	6	6	9	9	7.00
72	5	1	8	6	4	4.80	5	2	7	9	9	6.40
73	3	0	2	5	4	2.80	5	3	5	5	1	3.80
74	2	1	2	5	0	2.00	5	1	3	8	0	3.40
75	6	7	6	10	5	6.80	8	7	5	10	1	6.20
76	7	4	8	5	4	5.60	2	6	9	8	5	6.00
77	5	1	0	3	0	1.80	2	0	3	6	0	2.20
78	8	2	5	5	2	4.40	8	3	5	6	1	4.60
79	2	5	5	8	1	4.20	5	4	5	8	0	4.40
80	9	8	7	11	10	9.00	9	6	8	8	10	8.20
81	8	7	8	9	9	8.20	11	7	8	11	6	8.60
82	10	7	8	9	10	8.80	10	7	8	10	9	8.80
83	5	4	5	8	6	5.60	5	6	5	8	5	5.80
84	8	9	8	10	9	8.80	10	7	10	10	5	8.40
85	8	5	8	8	11	8.00	8	1	8	8	10	7.00
86	5	4	5	5	4	4.60	5	7	5	7	0	4.80
87	4	0	3	6	1	2.80	4	2	5	6	0	3.40
88	9	8	8	8	8	8.20	4	8	8	10	7	7.40
89	11	8	11	9	10	9.80	11	10	11	11	11	10.80
90	5	2	4	5	0	3.20	11	7	5	8	0	6.20
91	5	6	8	4	4	6.20	4	6	8	8	4	6.00
92	8	7	9	7	7	7.80	8	6	8	10	7	7.80

Table 11

Compilation Data: Student Grade Point Averages and Standard Deviations

	Semester 1	Semester 2
Grade 6		
Maximum	11.00	10.75
Minimum	0.50	2.25
Mean	6.09	6.54
Standard Dev.	2.84	2.77
Grade 7		
Maximum	10.75	10.75
Minimum	2.75	2.75
Mean	6.75	6.76
Standard Dev.	2.54	2.70
Grade 8		
Maximum	9.80	10.80
Minimum	1.80	2.20
Mean	6.20	6.51
Standard Dev.	2.31	2.59
Overall Group		
Maximum	11.00	10.80
Minimum	0.50	2.20
Mean	6.34	6.58
Standard Dev.	2.55	2.49

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The current study posed the null hypothesis that over time there was no decrease in the number of incompleted assignments using the FDA System in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades at the Newell-Fonda Middle School. The findings of this study do suggest that the FDA System does over time decrease the number of incompleted assignments ($z = 6.593$, $p < .01$, two-tailed). These findings are consistent with past research. Glomb and West (1990) noted a rise in assignment completion by use of the WATCH procedure, a systematic approach to assignment completion.

With the rejection of the null hypothesis, the variables inherent within the FDA System were analyzable through the use of mean scores from grade averages and Likert attitudinal scales.

Table 10 shows a slight mean gain in grade point average from the first to the second semester in all grade levels. Though the gain is slight and other variables such as maturation level over time and material studied (Harris & Graham, 1985) enter into this research, such a gain may in part be attributable to the FDA System.

Other variables were considered for possible influence on the effectiveness of the FDA System in decreasing over time the number of incompleted assignments at the middle school level. The first variable in

this study involved the use of absentee sheets within the FDA system to assist procrastinators in completing assignments due to absenteeism. All three subject groups indicated agreement that these absentee sheets were instrumental in completing on time work which was assigned during an absence ($\underline{M} = +1.41$). The results of the Likert attitudinal scale on this variable seem to suggest, as does Broadus (1983), that middle level students who often have difficulty focusing on tasks to be completed, believing that they can work well under pressure, but then become easily overwhelmed with unfinished work, benefit from both a clarification and structuring of goals. The assignment sheets appear to provide this clarification and structure as well as a definitive time frame for assignment completion and performance requirements. This seems to support earlier research which addresses the need to provide procrastinators realistic expectations and performance goals, if fear of failure is to be minimized (Dye, 1984).

In addition to the variable of the absentee sheet used to minimize failure in the procrastinating student who may easily become overwhelmed with work to be completed is the variable of student perception regarding the issuance of a second FDA for an assignment not completed.

While the pervasive attitude of students in the survey was that assignments are completed to avoid the issuance of a second FDA which

would bother middle level students (M = +1.08), it is interesting to note that eighth graders in the study appear less willing to avoid a second FDA (M = +.55) due to the possible emotional impact of receiving FDAs (M = -0.26) than did sixth and seventh graders in the study. There appears a tendency for older students to perceive the impact of assignments completed less in an emotional context than younger students. A number of variables such as maturation and teacher/student approval shifting more toward student/student approval may suggest the attitudinal changes apparent in the eighth grade subjects of this study.

The fourth variable of parental encouragement and fifth variable of teacher encouragement in the development of self-esteem for procrastinating students as well as those whose procrastination is more limited appeared to influence significantly reactions made by students. This tends to support earlier research (Alshuler, 1976; Chamberlain, 1981). While additional research would benefit from a parental survey addressing parent/student interactions in the completion of assignments using the FDA System, the current study seems to indicate that parental involvement is less influential in completing work, so further FDAs are not issued (M = +.40). These results seem to suggest that the assignment notebook wherein FDAs are recorded daily for parental viewing has less of an impact in communicating procrastinators' work habits to parents than may be desired (overall M = -0.93). Parents may

not be aware when FDAs are given (overall $\underline{M} = -0.27$).

Research may offer a possible suggestion for this. Procrastinators often do not believe they have a problem in the completion of assignments (Broadus, 1983) or may avoid the issue of work completion to protect self-esteem (Burka & Yuen, 1983). Therefore, if a problem exists and an FDA is issued, a student may not relay that problem to parents via the assignment book, not out of willful deception but out of avoidance or protectionism. Parents may be reluctant to nightly press the issue of FDAs and incompleted work, if the student gives the appearance that all work is adequately completed.

On the other hand, teacher motivation and encouragement appears as a more consistent factor on the students within this study. Through individual and teacher advisor/advisee contact, several interesting notations can be made regarding the overall effectiveness of the FDA System relevant to the fourth variable of teacher encouragement.

While the attitude toward teacher/advisee groups encouraging students to make up incompleted work varies from one advisory group to another ($\underline{M} = +1.67$ to $\underline{M} = -0.22$), there appears to be an overall greater degree of agreement among the three student groups surveyed that encouragement to complete incompleted work is done within the daily fifteen-minute teacher advisory group meeting ($\underline{M} = +0.83$). This is supported by earlier research into the value of supportive academic

settings relevant to work completion (Broadus, 1983; Coloroso, 1991).

The survey of staff members involved in this study, too, strongly suggests that encouragement in building self-esteem is an integral aspect of the teacher's role in helping procrastinating students complete academic work ($\underline{M} = +1.23$).

Another possible explanation for the impact of teacher/advisee groups in helping with student assignment completion may rest with the teacher/advisee group itself. Within such a group, shared responsibility for work completed and shared benefits for work completed may influence members to assume a more definitive commitment to work completion, thus providing an expansion of concern and feelings of self-worth (Chamberlain, 1981). This is further supported by earlier research into the setting of standards by parents, teachers, and peers (Natriello & McDill, 1986; Larrabee, 1988). Goal-setting and planning remain critical options to helping students assume responsibility for their work completion (Tollefson et al., 1985).

The results of consequences for the issuance of FDAs beyond the three allowed per grading week yielded several interesting attitudinal responses to the fifth variable in this study.

The mandatory study hall for students on the FDA list as well as the daily break period for students not on the FDA list seem to have less effect within the entire FDA System than one might speculate. The daily

FDA study hall wherein students secure assistance in making up incomplete work seems to have little impact relevant to finishing assignments (overall $\underline{M}$ = -0.02). Although students agree that homework given has value and strengthens what is learned within the class, students with work incomplete do not agree that the FDA study hall is the place where they complete that work.

A possible reason for this attitude may involve the time limitation of the study hall. A ten-minute period may not provide adequate time for middle school students to mentally and physically organize themselves for quality engaged learning time.

The monitor of the study hall may or may not be a teacher who assigned the work which the student has difficulty completing. From the student's perception, the scope of assistance may be too limited; therefore, the desire to complete work is limited. Teachers assigned to the FDA study hall on a weekly rotating basis, though somewhat undecided, appear to share some of the student reservation about completing FDA assignments within the FDA study hall (overall $\underline{M}$ = 0.00).

Another possible reason for this middle school attitude regarding the FDA study hall may be that students who attend that study hall opposite the break period for all other students view it as a personal punishment rather than as an educational opportunity, thus impacting on

the amount and quality of engaged learning time.

Along with the FDA study hall, the loss of the mid-morning break for students who are on the FDA list appeared to have less impact on these students than might be assumed (overall M=-0.12). Although apparently popular with those students not on the FDA list, those who must spend time in the weekly study hall seem to not be affected negatively by loss of that break.

A possible reason may be that this incentive is viewed less as an incentive than as a part of the daily routine which, if taken away, merely varies that routine for a limited time. A second reason may involve the format of the question posed to the students: "I miss having the morning break when I have to go to FDA study hall." The undecided Likert response may or may not have been a sufficient choice for the student who does not consistently receive FDAs. A more suitable question may have elicited a more measurable attitude response toward loss of the morning break.

A third possible suggestion is that there may have been a degree of rebellion present in those procrastinators who miss morning break to attend a study session. Their responses may indicate an avoidance of what is expected (i.e. missing the break period), thus providing a way to express frustration. Though this supposition cannot be validated in the confines of the present survey, such a reaction further explored has

basis in past research (Ellis & Knaus, 1977; Broadus, 1983).

More significantly noteworthy is the fifth variable centering on student attitude that FDAs are made up more readily to avoid missing activities as sports, music, contests, and practice sessions for athletics. With over ninety-percent of students involved in some school activity, the impact of involvement or loss of involvement is evident (overall $\underline{M} = +.72$).

Reactions to making up an FDA to avoid missing activities or athletic practices was highest with subjects in sixth grade ($\underline{M} = +1.15$) and seventh grade ($\underline{M} = +1.44$). The reactions of eighth grade subjects was decidedly lower.

A possible low attitudinal reaction for subjects in eighth grade may involve a bias which may have developed just prior to issuance of the survey. All thirty-two eighth graders attended an orientation session for prospective high school students at the district's second attendance center. The high school does not have a school-wide system for monitoring procrastinating students that involves loss of activities and practices for one week when incomplete work reaches a predetermined level. Students may have been influenced by this in their responses to a system in place at the eighth-grade level.

The results of the current study suggest that the FDA System for monitoring middle school procrastinators generalized to the population in

the study. Most noticeable variables within the FDA System predictive of the system's success within the Newell-Fonda Middle School include:

1) The use of assignment sheets for organization and goal-setting activities of absent students.

2) Teacher advisory involvement in goal setting, encouragement to complete assignments, and self-concept development of middle school students.

3) The use of activities as incentives to complete work and avoid FDAs beyond the predetermined limits of three FDAs per grading week.

Limitations of Study

Further research is suggested which could employ a more limited control group for further comparative studies. Established board policy as well as difficulty in locating a comparable district with an established plan for recording and monitoring procrastinating students limited the extent to which this research was able to proceed.

Time factors did not allow the development, distribution, return, and tabulation of a parental survey. This survey is recommended for subsequent research as it would provide a valuable prospectus not available for this research.

Provided that a monitoring system for procrastinating students was in place and data recorded and collected, a single case or limited group study would be beneficial in tracking a procrastinating student or a

select group of procrastinating students at the middle school level by using variables similar to those of the FDA System.

A longitudinal study which would follow a sixth grade middle-level class through the three years of middle school is also recommended. This study could broaden the perspective of the FDA System over an extended period of time in helping procrastinating students complete assignments.

While some may find the use of self-report measures such as attitude scales limiting due to the difficulty in ascertaining the degree to which the subject's responses reflect his or her true attitudes, the use of the Likert scale in this study was critical for its possible predictive value in identifying positive variables in the FDA System.

Future study recommends that the staff questionnaire be lengthened to include eight to ten questions per area of concentration. This would aid more complete statistical evaluation.

In addition to the lengthened staff questionnaire, further study would benefit from a separate questionnaire for each parent of students in the middle level grades at Newell-Fonda Middle School.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Sample Assignment Sheet

Teacher: Mr. Schmitt
Lit. 8, Reading 6, German, English 7
Date Assignment Given:
M T W TR F _____

Mustangs

"Motivate us to a new grade success."

STUDENT ABSENT:

☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐

STUDENTS EARNING AN FDA

☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐
☐ _____ ☐

*WASN'T RECORDED BECAUSE HE/SHE DIDN'T HAVE ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOK

ASSIGNMENT:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

When completed, staple this sheet to your makeup assignment and return to your teacher. No credit will be given unless this sheet accompanies makeup work. Have the necessary people sign your assignment sheet.

Goals For Period: _____

Assignment Due Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Principal Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Teacher Remarks And Notations

APPENDIX B

Sample Absentee Assignment Sheet

ASSIGNMENT

M T W TH F Date _____

Literature/	Grade	Reading/	Grade	NOTES/COMMENTS
	Init Done		Init Done	
Social Studies/	Grade	English/	Grade	NOTES/COMMENTS
	Init Done		Init Done	
Math/	Grade	/	Grade	NOTES/COMMENTS

Parents and teacher should discuss the use of the notebook as a daily/weekly report card before implementation.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

* Fill in Name, Dates, Subject Areas and Daily Assignments.
* Give to each teacher as pre-arranged.
* Pick up notebook at the end of class to take to next class.
* Give to Parents after school.
* Return notebook to school next day.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

* Arrange with student how and when you want notebook presented.
* Fill in grade and make comments when appropriate.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

* Read and review the notebook each evening.
* Discuss concerns with student.
* See that all assignments are completed before student leaves for school the next morning.
* Sign and return to student.

APPENDIX C
Telephone Survey

TELEPHONE CONTACTS OF AREA EDUCATORS

1. YES NO NOT SURE 1. Our school has a school-wide system for monitoring daily the number of assignments completed by our middle school students.

2. YES NO NOT SURE 2. Individual teachers in our school handle assignments not completed by middle school students by different methods.

3. YES NO NOT SURE 3. My middle school students procrastinate in completing school work.

4. YES NO NOT SURE 4. A common concern in our school is getting our middle school students to hand in their work on time.

5. YES NO NOT SURE 5. I give a 0 grade on an assignment given one day and due the next if it is not completed.

6. YES NO NOT SURE 6. My middle school students have problems organizing themselves and their daily work.

---

1. What is the size of your middle school?

   under 50 50-100 100-200 200-300 300-400 above 400

2. What is the grade configuration of your middle school:

   6-7-8 7-8 7-8-9 6-7 other _____

3. If no school-wide assignment monitoring system is used at your school, what are some ways you and your colleagues monitor assignments completed?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D
Student Questionnaire

Mustang Power in the 90's

The questions below are looking for honest answers. Your answers are confidential. No one will know how you personally answered them. Just circle the one answer you believe fits your viewpoint the best.

1. I complete assignments on time because I know if I don't, I'll get an FDA which would bother me.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

2. I find it difficult to complete work on time because I delay doing it.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

3. I receive an FDA for work I do not finish.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

4. I complete an FDA to avoid a second FDA on it.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

5. In FDA study hall I work on assignments not finished.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

6. I know why I am getting an FDA (i.e. teacher tells me).

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

7. When I get an FDA, the teacher records it in my assignment book.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

8. I am getting fewer FDAs as the year goes on.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

9. The absentee sheet helps me set goals and plans to get my work made up on time when I am absent from class.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

10. My parents know when I get an FDA.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

11. My parents encourage me to get my FDA made up so that I do not get another FDA.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

12. My parents look at my assignment book to see if I have any FDAs.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

13. My teachers check my assignment book to see if I have an FDA.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

14. My teacher advisor (TA) encourages me to get my FDA made up by helping me develop a goal and a plan so I will not get another FDA.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

15. My homework does not strengthen what I learn in class.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

16. The homework I get at NFMS is work I do not get done in class.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

17. I get FDAs for homework not done because the work doesn't mean much because it does not have value to me.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

18. I miss having the morning break when I have to go to FDA study hall.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

19. I receive a 0 grade on a test or assignment because I let myself get 4 FDAs on that test or assignment.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

20. I think the FDA System helps me get my work done on time at NFMS by giving me the choice to do my work.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

21. I get my FDA made up quickly so I do not miss after school activities such as football, basketball, and music.

    STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

APPENDIX E
Staff Questionnaire

The Mustangs want your input

The following questions are designed to help you zero in on some key elements of the FDA System. Your answers are confidential. Answer the questions as they pertain to your knowledge and attitudes.

1. I give an FDA if a student does not have work completed for my class.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

2. I have to give a grade of 0 at least once weekly because a student has received three consecutive FDAs on a given assignment.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

3. By giving them suggestions or a plan, I encourage my students to make up FDA work before they receive another FDA.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

4. My students do not try to make up their first FDA to avoid a second FDA.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

5. I let my students know they are getting an FDA by telling them and recording the FDA in their assignment book.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

6. By reviewing my grade book, I don't see that the FDA System is helping students complete assignments by giving them three chances to accept responsibility for an assignment.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

7. The homework I give at NFMS reinforces what I teach during class.

   STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

8. When I am in FDA study hall to monitor, students do not work on assignments which need to be made up.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

9. In my teaching I see a middle school student problem of procrastinating or delaying doing work.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

10. Students in my classes do not tend to make excuses for work not completed.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

11. I see a positive difference in the number of assignments completed the further the school year progresses.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

12. I do not believe that my grade and assignment records show that the FDA System helps students complete assignments by giving them the choice to finish school work.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

13. I believe the FDA System gives students a choice thereby teaching them a degree of responsibility.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

APPENDIX F
Permission Requests

Fonda, Iowa 50540

Randy Nielsen
Principal
Newell-Fonda Middle School
3rd and Howard
Fonda, IA 50540

Dear Mr. Nielsen:

As part of my thesis research for a specialist degree from Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, I would like to survey the middle school students at NFMS regarding their feelings about the Failure to Do Assignment or FDA System.

If possible, I would like to survey the middle school students for ten minutes beginning and ending on November 25. A copy of the survey is included for consideration. The survey uses the Likert scale which has been proven superior to all other scale types in yielding meaningful correlation coefficients. The survey which I have developed has also been verified prior to its administration.

The survey has been designed for name identity confidentiality.

If your approval is granted to administer this survey, please sign the following permission request.

Thank you for your time regarding this survey. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Randy Schmitt

I hereby grant permission for a survey of attitudes on the FDA System to be administered November 25. I understand that confidentiality of the middle school students at NFMS will be preserved.

_____, Principal of Newell-Fonda Middle School

Fonda, Iowa 50540

Randy Nielsen
Principal
Newell-Fonda Middle School
3rd and Howard
Fonda, IA 50540

Dear Mr. Nielsen:

As part of my thesis research for a specialist degree from Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, I would like to survey the middle school staff members at NFMS regarding their feelings about the Failure to Do Assignment or FDA System.

If possible, I would like to survey the middle school staff for ten minutes beginning and ending on December 18. A copy of the survey is included for consideration. The survey uses the Likert scale which has been proven superior to all other scale types in yielding meaningful correlation coefficients. The survey which I have developed has also been verified prior to its administration.

The survey has been designed for name identity confidentiality.

If your approval is granted to administer this survey, please sign the following permission request.

Thank you for your time regarding this survey. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Randy Schmitt

I hereby grant permission for a survey of attitudes on the FDA System to be administered December 18. I understand that confidentiality of the middle school staff at NFMS will be preserved.

_____, Principal of Newell-Fonda Middle School